



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 1, 2025

ATF Head Quits to Avoid Being Fired

Steven Dettelbach, the director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), [sent a letter of resignation to Joe Biden](#) late last month, announcing his intention to leave his position just two days before Trump's inauguration on Monday, January 20.

He touted his "success" during his reign:

Under your leadership, and that of the Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General, we met head on the challenge of a historic spike in violent crime coming out of the pandemic.

As I leave the ATF, the country has experienced two years of historic decreases in the violent crime rates, including drops in firearms related crime.

That progress did not occur by accident. The heroic, talented, and hard-working people at ATF, along with our many partners, fought hard and risked everything to gain that ground.

And Americans are better off for it.



AP Images
Steve Dettelbach

He had practiced his "success" speech in an interview with the left-wing National Public Radio (NPR) the day before submitting his resignation:

DETTELBAACH: Since I started at ATF, the numbers on violent crime now for two years in a row have come down precipitously. And I think this'll be, as we finish out this year, a third.

NPR: FBI statistics show that, in 2023, violent crime fell 3%, including a sharp drop in homicides. The FBI's preliminary figures for the first half of 2024 show violent crime down another 10% compared to the same period the previous year.

DETTELBAACH: So violent crime is dropping precipitously, and I just want to say, that doesn't happen by accident.

NPR had the audacity to give credit to Dettelbach for helping the FBI "investigate" the near-fatal assassination attempt of Donald Trump in Butler, Pennsylvania, in July:



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ATF ... provided firearm traces that were crucial in cases big and small, including ... the attempted assassination of then-candidate Donald Trump at a rally in Pennsylvania this July.

The Rest of the Story

Both NPR and Dettelbach ignored Dettelbach's failures as head of the ATF, and neglected the rest of the story. Consider:

The ATF failed to respond to the House Task Force on the attempted Trump assassination. [From a letter](#) the task force sent to Dettelbach in November:

The Task Force's October 3rd letter specifically outlined seventeen requests for production as well as three categories of requests for select transcribed interviews with relevant ATF agents who provided support or response functions in connection with the attempted assassination of Donald J. Trump.... To date, the ATF has failed to produce a single document responsive to the Task Force's requests."

Dettelbach's "pistol brace" rule change would have required law-abiding owners of pistols fitted with them to register them under the National Firearms Act of 1934, pay a fee, and give up their Fourth Amendment rights to protection from the ATF's "unreasonable searches and seizures."

His agency expanded its definition of "gun dealer" so that anyone even considering offering a firearm for sale would be required to register with the agency as a dealer. That would place him inside the orbit of the agency's enforcement arm.

The ATF implemented Biden's "zero tolerance" policy regarding violations by federal firearms licensees so that even a tiny bookkeeping error would result in revocation of those licenses. This enforcement has cost hundreds of gun dealers their licenses and their livelihoods.

Malinowski Raid

And nothing was mentioned of the Gestapo-like tactics employed by the ATF in its attempt to make a political statement regarding who might or might not be a "gun dealer." *The New American* covered the ATF's egregious assault that resulted in the murder of an innocent American gun owner.

The agency worked to entrap Bryan Malinowski, and then raided his home without notice on May 19. When Malinowski, awakened at 6:00 a.m. by a swarm of ATF agents breaking down his front door, attempted to defend himself and his family, an ATF agent shot him dead. The agent was later deemed "justified" because he was defending himself against Malinowski's attack.

From *The New American*:

What were those agents doing inside of Malinowski's home that they were "justified" in killing him? What about Malinowski's right to defend himself against what he and his wife perceived to be a home invasion by terrorists?

All good questions.

Here are some more:

1. Why was the raid at 6:03 a.m., when the agency knew Malinowski and his wife would likely still be asleep?



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2. Why were 10 - 10! - SWAT vehicles and a dozen or more ATF agents involved in the raid?
3. Why did they use "no knock" tactics?
4. Why weren't they wearing body cameras?
5. Why did one of the agents deliberately block the front door camera from recording the raid?
6. Why didn't they inform Malinowski that he was a target of the "search" warrant during the day? After all, they had been tracking him and his allegedly "illegal" purchases and sales of firearms since December 2023.

The ATF accomplished its mission, though. Private gun dealers across the land were put on notice that they too could be attacked and murdered in their homes by ATF agents if they ran afoul of the agency's newly enhanced definition of just who a "gun dealer" is.

The ATF's outrageous tactics caught the attention of Representative Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), head of the House Judiciary Committee. Jordan wrote a letter to the ATF stating:

ATF has not explained why it resorted to a no knock entry of Mr. Malinowski's home when it could have peacefully executed the warrant while he was away from his residence.

Dettelbach's agency never responded to this request, either.

January 20 cannot come quickly enough.

Related articles:

[ATF Shooting of Bryan Malinowski in Pre-dawn Raid "Justified"](#)

[Freedom Caucus Member to Reintroduce Gaetz's Abolish the ATF Act](#)



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